

# **Storytelling for Empowerment**

## **Brief Program Description**

Storytelling has been used for centuries by humans to pass on values and cultural identity, and as such is a natural vehicle for nurturing resiliency factors in youth. This storytelling approach to prevention creates the protective factors of a positive peer group identification and a positive cultural identity. Storytelling for Empowerment is a school-based secondary prevention program designed for club and classroom settings project serving American Indian and Latino-Latina middle school youth. The project addresses the risk factors of confusion of cultural identity, the lack of congruence of multicultural learning styles and instruction, and the lack of consistent, positive parental role models.

The goal of this program is to decrease the incidence of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use among high-risk youth by identifying and reducing factors in the individual, family, school, peer group, neighborhood/community, and society/media that place youth at high risk for ATID use. In addition it attempts to enhance factors that may strengthen youth resiliency and protect youth from alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use.

## **Program Strategies**

The major components of the Storytelling for Empowerment Project are the Storytelling PowerBook, which is a 27-lesson activity book, accompanied by a detailed Facilitator's Guide. The sections in the PowerBook included: Knowledge Power (knowledge of brain physiology, definition of addictions, physical effects of drug, charts, games); Skills Power (decision making strategies with role plays); Personal Power (five multicultural stories, symbol making, plays); Character Power (four multicultural stories of historical figures, character trait mandalas); Culture Power (definitions of culture, biculture, sub culture, cultural symbol); and Future Power (stories of multicultural role models, choosing a role model, drawings, goal setting).

## **Population Focus**

The specific target population for the Storytelling for Empowerment Project is American Indian middle school-aged youth living on a rural Indian Nation, as well as Latino-Latina middle school-aged youth living in urban settings.

## **Suitable Settings**

The intervention is suitable for club formats and other school-based settings.

**Required Resources**

Storytelling PowerBook (English and Spanish)

Storytelling for Prevention (English and Spanish)

Facilitator's Guide for Storytelling PowerBook

Available on [www.wheelcouncil.org](http://www.wheelcouncil.org)

**Implementation Timeline**

As 20-30 sessions are necessary to decrease alcohol and marijuana use, the intervention can be implemented within 3 months during the school year.

**Outcomes**

Major program outcomes included:

- There was a significant interaction between dosage and alcohol use during the past 30 days. Participants with less than 28 hours of dosage significantly increased their use of alcohol, while those with more than 28 hours.
- Usage of alcohol and marijuana (number of days used in the past 30 days) was lower among high dosage students compared with low dosage students.
- High dosage participants possess less favorable attitudes toward drug use than low dosage participants.
- For all participants alcohol use was reduced.
- For all participants, their resistance (i.e., will not take drugs when offered by a friend) reduced in respect to a comparison group.

**Contact Information**

For indepth information on this program, please use the contact listed below.

**Program Developer**

Annabelle Nelson, Ph.D.

The Wheel Council

P.O. Box 22517

Flagstaff, AZ 86002-2516

Phone: (928) 214-0120

Fax: (928) 214-7379

Email: [annabelle@wheelcouncil.org](mailto:annabelle@wheelcouncil.org)